

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LIBREV 00868 120847Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 TRSE-00 HA-05 IO-13

/116 W

-----094871 122159Z /62

R 111600Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 857

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

US INTERESTS HAVANA 05

USCOMSOLANT

USDAO KINSHASA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 0868

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, TP, GB

SUBJ: ALLEGED PROPOSED INVASION OF SAO TOME

REF: LIBREVILLE 804 AND PREVIOUS (NOTAL)

1. TO OUR SURPRISE SAO TOME STORY MENTIONED REFTEL SHOWED
UP IN THREE PART SERIES GABONESE DAILY L'UNION
APRIL 7-10. "ATTEMPTED INVASION" STORY ESSENTIALLY AS OUTLINED
TO AMBASSADOR BY CHALLARD BUT CONTAINED FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL
DETAILS, REFINEMENTS, OR SPECULATIONS:

A. AUTHOR ALLEGED INTERCEPTED LETTER FROM CUBA IDENTIFIED
AS ALCINO DE LIMA, FORMER ADVISOR TO PRESIDENT DACOSTA, WHO
HAD BEEN ON TRAINING ASSIGNMENT IN HAVANA. LETTER REPORTEDLY
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PAGE 02 LIBREV 00868 120847Z

OUTLINED PLANS TO ELIMINATE PRESIDENT DACOSTA.

B. DACOSTA'S FEBRUARY ACTION MAY HAVE BEEN TOUCHED OFF
BY USN SHIPS INCHON AND SPRUANCE WHICH "PASSED BETWEEN THE
ISLANDS OF SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE" AFTER THEIR GOOD WILL VISIT
TO LIBREVILLE.

C. AMONG THOSE ARRESTED ARE SAID TO BE THE FORMER COM-MANDANT OF THE ARMED FORCES, ALBERTINO NETO AND HIS WIFE; FORMER MINISTER OF JUSTICE, HOSE FRET LAU CHONG; AND FORMER MEMBER OF THE MSPT POLITICAL BUREAU, MRS. ALEXANDRINA LIMA BARROS.

D. ACCORDING TO CHALLARD'S ARTICLE, SOME 650 TROOPS DESCRIBED AS "ANGOLAN" ARRIVED IN SAO TOME IN EARLY MARCH BUT THEY SPOKE SPANISH AND WERE COMMANDED BY BLUE EYED, BLOND HAIRED CUBAN OFFICERS.

2. COMMENT: WE STILL UNABLE ADEQUATELY CRITIQUE CHALLARD'S STORY BUT ON ONE DETAIL, THAT OF THE USN SHIPS, WE KNOW HE IS WRONG; AND ON ANOTHER, STATIONING OF 650 CUBAN TROOPS WE ARE SKEPTICAL. WHILE WE CANNOT DISCOUNT POSSIBILSTY THAT USS INCHON AND USS SPRUANCE WERE SEEN FROM STP OR BY STP FISHERMAN, CHALLARD'S CONTENTION THAT THEIR ACTIONS AFTER VISITING LIBREVILLE WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR DACOSTA'S CONCERN DOES NOT FIT THE FACTS. THE SHIPS DEPARTED LIBREVILLE SIX DAYS AFTER DACOSTA'S APPEAL. THE PRESENCE OF 650 CUBAN TROOPS DISGUISED AS ANGOLANS STRIKES US AS EXCESSIVE AND HAS, SO FAR AS WE KNOW,NO CORROBORATION, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE HEARD SAME STORY FROM BELGIAN AMBASSADOR. EMD COMMENT.

3. L'UNION APRIL 11 ANNOUNCED THAT TWO GABONESE PRESIDENTIAL ADVISORS VISITING SAO TOME TODAY TO DELIVER CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 LIBREV 00868 120847Z

"GOOD WILL" MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT DACOSTA FROM BONGO FOLLOWING THE VISIT OF STP AMBASSADOR AT LARGE MARIA AMORIM. ARTICLE CITES VISIT AS EVIDENCE OF THAW IN RELATIONS BETWEEN GABON AND STP.

4. COMMENT: EMBASSY RECEIVED PERMISSION FROM GSTP APRIL 11 FOR AMBASSADOR TO PRESENT CREDENTIALS TO GSTP WEEK APRIL 17 AND TO BE TRANSPORTED BY USDAO AIRCRAFT. ALTHOUGH HE UNABLE TO MAKE PROPOSED DATES, WE CONSIDER GSTP ACTION AS INDICATIVE THAT USG NOT SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED TO BE CULPABLE IN "ATTEMPTED INVASION." RE CUBANS, WE SUGGEST DEPT. TREAT REPORT WITH CONSIDERABLE RESERVE AT LEAST UNTIL WE HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE PERSONAL RECONNAISSANCE. END COMMENT.

5. WE POUCHING COMPLETE THREE PART ARTICLE TO AF/C. TIENKEN

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NNN

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